

# THE TRUE STORY OF A VIGILANTE GROUP OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WHO CONSPIRED TO KILL SIX MILLION GERMANS

*Nakam* (Hebrew for “vengeance”) tells the story of “the Avengers” (Nokmim), a group of young Holocaust survivors led by poet and resistance fighter Abba Kovner, who undertook a mission of revenge against Germany following the crimes of the Holocaust. Motivated by the atrocities they had endured and the realization that murderous antisemitic attacks on survivors continued long after the Nazi surrender, these fifty young men and women sought retaliation at a level commensurate with the devastation caused by the Holocaust, making clear to the world that Jewish blood would no longer be shed with impunity. Had they been successful, they would have poisoned city water supplies, with the aim of killing six million Germans. Kovner and his followers went to great lengths to carry out their plans. They obtained the schematics for Nuremberg’s municipal water system, secured large quantities of poison, infiltrated a POW camp and the bakery that supplied it, and distributed poisoned bread to German POWs—but their plots were ultimately stymied. Most of the members of *Nakam* eventually immigrated to Israel, where for decades many of them refused to speak publicly about their roles in the group.

While the Avengers’ story began to come to light in the 1980s, details of the relations between the group and Zionist leadership and the motivations of its members have remained

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unknown. Drawing on rich archival sources and in-depth interviews with the Avengers in their later years, historian Dina Porat examines the formation of the group and the clash between the formative humanistic values held by its members and their unrealized plans for violent retribution.



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